

Newsletter Jerusalem Baptist Church

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Theme Number: Persecuted Christians

COLOFON

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Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Romans 8:35-39

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*In Christ Alone
No power of hell,
no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me
from His hand;
'til He returns or
calls me home,
Here in the power
of Christ I'll stand!*

Serving our Lord until He comes...



LETTER FROM THE PASTOR Dr. Al Nucciarone

SUFFERING AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST



“We need prayer, the Word of God, and trials to grow and live the victorious Christian life.” Martin Luther

Prayer helps us to focus on the Lord and to look to Him for strength and guidance. The Word of God fortifies our soul. Trials test the genuineness of our faith. They help us to grow in character. Of course, as Christians, we can experience trials and problems because we have violated God’s commands. We certainly reap what we sow. Jesus had something else in mind about our trials as believers. We sometimes suffer because we are followers of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” Jesus also said in John 15:18-19, “If the world hates you, understand that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you.” We have been called not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him.

In the world today many Christians are suffering for their faith. In Iran, pastors and church leaders are being tortured and imprisoned because they love Jesus. We know of many Christians in China who must meet secretly because of the fear of persecution. Andrew White, the Vicar of Baghdad, has thousands of members in his church. Hundreds of them are killed every week in sectarian violence. Many of his people, former Muslims, are immediately killed after they follow the Lord in baptism. We as Christians in other areas of the world may not experience violent persecution,



Iranian believer baptized in Norway

but still we will have subtle forms of persecution like ostracism, rejection, and ridicule.

The book of First Peter can be called a "Syllabus for Suffering Saints". It was written to believers who were dispersed around Asia Minor because of their faith. In Acts 8 we read about the persecuted saints in Jerusalem of whom many were dispersed throughout Judea and Samaria. In order to encourage them, Peter first tells them that they have a living hope. Their inheritance is imperishable and unfading. They are protected by God's power through faith for salvation that is to be revealed in the last time. He compliments them for their joyful spirit in the midst of trials. He considers that the genu-



ineness of their faith in the midst of trials is more valuable than gold which perishes.

Their faith is refined by fire and results in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

In spite of their difficult situation, they are called to live a holy life before the world. They are called to be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession so that they may proclaim the praises of the Lord. They are to be a people dedicated to good works. They are to submit to every human institution. They are to do this as a testimony. If they are workers or employees or

slaves, they are to work for their masters with respect. They are to do this even if they endure grief from unjust suffering. We are to do all of this because Christ has suffered for us leaving us an example. He was reviled, but did not revile in return. When suffering, He did not threaten. He committed Himself to God who judges justly.

Peter continues and encourages wives to submit and obey even if they are treated harshly by their husbands. They can win them through their behavior. We are all called to not pay back evil for evil. We are to give a blessing instead. We must be true peacemakers.

Peter calls us blessed if we suffer for righteousness. We should not be surprised if we go through a fiery ordeal. We should rejoice because the Spirit of God and His glory rests on us. We as believers are to do good when we

suffer in the will of God.

Peter exhorts the elders to be good examples as they follow Christ in His sufferings. We must show the flock how to endure as the Lord did. He concludes with a command to be sober and alert, knowing the devil is like a lion seeking to devour us. We are to resist him and realize that others suffer the same attacks. He concludes with a prayer that God would give grace and help in our time of unjust suffering. He will restore us and strengthen us through it all.



So what then shall we do as face suffering because we stand for Christ? We must prepare ourselves.

First we must face the fact that suffering for the Lord is part of our calling. In fact we should be rejoicing in our trials according to James 1.

Secondly, we must pray for guidance and help. We need to also pray for those who are imprisoned for Christ around the world according to Hebrews 13.

Thirdly, we must fortify ourselves in the Word of God. The Word in our hearts will encourage us in time of need.

Lastly we must continue to serve God and be a witness for Him. Our toil will not be in vain and it will be worth it all when we see Jesus in glory.

"But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten." Jeremiah 20:11

A Southern preacher said, "When the Lord sends tribulation, He 'spect us to tribulate."

NEWS FROM JORDAN

[The following testimony we already shared in the previous newsletter, but this is the extended version.]

My friend, pastor R, called me from his tent in Jordan on the Syrian border where thousands of Syrians have flooded across the border escaping their homeland and living in tents in the snow and frigid rains. Pastor R. told me he was sipping tea in a tea shop near the border when the Holy Spirit prompted him to move across the room and sit at a table with a complete stranger. After sitting down he realized his new friend was an imam who had a local congregation of more than 400 Muslims that he addressed weekly. This imam had been at this particular mosque for more than forty years as their Islamic leader. After talking for several minutes, the imam out of the clear blue asked Pastor R. what he knew of this man, Jesus Christ. Trying not to show his shock and disbelief at the imam's question, Pastor R. went on to explain the gospel to the imam.

Then the imam exclaimed, "That's what I have been looking for my whole life. How can I know this Jesus Christ?"

Pastor R. led the imam in the sinner's prayer and Pastor R. immediately began to disciple him.

A few weeks later Pastor R. received word of this new convert's death. This Imam had been so immersed with the gospel of Jesus Christ that he spoke to his congregation of Muslims and asked them to forgive him for teaching a false religion for the past forty years. The men there charged the stage and beat him to death on the spot. The last man to hit him before he stopped breathing, was a Syrian freedom fighter who later returned to fight in Syria. A few weeks later this fighter was shot in the foot and one evening stumbled across the Syrian border to his home town in Jordan. It was very dark as he fell into the house of what he thought was his home. He passed out on the floor before a woman appeared to begin attending to his wound. A few minutes later he regained consciousness and looked up into the face of the woman who was bandaging his wound and much to his surprise he realized it was the wife of the imam that he had helped to kill.

He said to the Martyr's wife, "Do you know who I am?"

The woman replied, "Yes, you are one of the men who killed my husband."

"Then why do you still help me?" He asked.

The woman replied, "My husband is in heaven now, and my faith in Jesus Christ commands me to help you."

The wounded man exclaimed, "I don't know who this Jesus is you speak of, but if that is what He teaches, I want to know Him."

Then he came to faith in Jesus, led by the wife of the man he had helped to murder.



SOCHI OUTREACH AND THE FUTURE

Coach Terry's sports ministry friends in the Ukraine sent him the following email, "During the Olympics at Sochi (February 7-23, 2014) that just ended a few days ago, more than 150,000 athletes and fans accepted Christ as a result of their outreach there. Most of the converts were Russians and Ukrainians. As a result of the Eurasia games in 2012, more than 1400 Bible study groups were established and are still ongoing. Now the sports coalition ministry there is rushing to get all those who professed faith in Christ into one of these Bible studies. My friends really feel that what has now happened with Russia invading their country is spiritual warfare and they are going to fight it with everything God has provided them. They are asking for believers around the world to join them in fasting and prayer at least one a day a week between now and Easter for the Lord to bolster the believers in their faith for the approaching conflict."

Sochi, located in southern Russia along the Black Sea, is only a few hundred miles from the troubled Caucasus Mountains region where there has been much bloodshed and terrorist activity. The North Caucasus region of Russia has long suffered from political unrest. Evangelical churches in the region work hard to reach people with the good news that following Jesus Christ offers eternal hope – hope that cannot be found in any political dogma. Pray

for the pastors and members of these churches to have boldness and stamina as they continue to reach out to those around them.

What happened in Sochi during the Olympic Games?



Receiving a pin and listening to the meaning of the colors

Partnerships. Unity. Cooperation. Sharing - important when it comes to proclaiming Christ to the world. Organizations, churches, and Christians worldwide worked together to establish a beachhead for ministry in Sochi, the home of the 2014 Winter Olympics. Russian pastors sent out teams to witness on the streets and distribute tracts, despite the fact that Christian organizations were told not to evangelize on the streets of Sochi. "The message we have to share is so much more precious than winning a gold medal—something only a few ever get the chance to do," said Marc Ira Hooks, co-director of Engage Sochi. "We are talking about something that every person can have: a personal relationship with God." The unofficial Olympic spectator sport was pin trading, so Engage Sochi designed

a pin that was fun to trade, people liked and wanted. Colors on the pin (similar to the Olympic rings) were used to present the plan of salvation.

Nearly 200 Southern Baptists traveled to the Games to participate in Engage Sochi. As the streets came alive with bluegrass music, Dixieland jazz, clowns, balloon artists and drama groups, a Russian security officer asked one Engage Sochi team,

"Are you here to make a spiritual difference? Because it's working!"



Over 13,000 Engage Sochi trading pins and Gospels tracts were distributed during the 17 days of the Games.

NEWS FROM BETHLEHEM

In the December 2013 edition of JBC news we shared a "True Story From Bethlehem" - forgiving, even when you don't feel like it! Please, continue to pray for J & Z in Bethlehem. They are a MBB couple that Coach Terry and Dianne mentor once a week. The believers are still struggling with persecution from their families but staying strong in their walk with the Lord and their Bible Studies. They have two daughters, ages two years and two months.



"Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness."

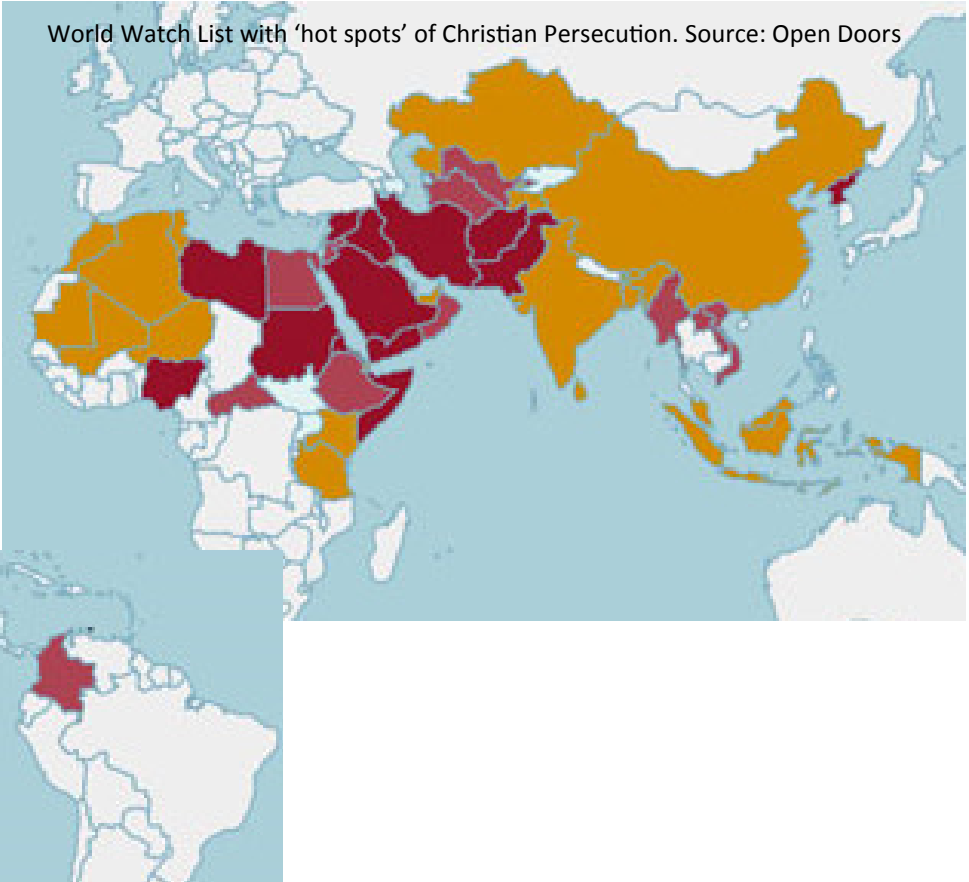
God is doing a mighty work amongst Muslims in Bethlehem.

One day, Coach Terry went to have a 'white chicken' (= Turkey) pizza with a Muslim coach. As they began to eat, he wondered how to steer the conversation towards the Gospel, when the Muslim friend said, "Coach. What does "born again Christian" mean?" Coach Terry then told him about God's plan of salvation, and right there and then in that pizza place, this Muslim gave his life to Christ.

During one of the regular Bible studies Coach Terry has with these MBB's, (Muslim Background Believers) one of the recent believers asked if it was all right to keep listening to the hard-rock music he so loved.

Before Coach Terry had a chance to say something, one of the other men spoke up and told his brother in Christ that he shouldn't listen to satanic music that drew him away from Christ. "You must fill yourself with God's word, and not with things from the world!"

World Watch List with 'hot spots' of Christian Persecution. Source: Open Doors



*"Suffering, then, is the badge of true discipleship.
The disciple is not above his master....
Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ,
and it is therefore not at all surprising
that Christians should be called upon to suffer."
Dietrich Bonhoeffer.*

DEFENITION OF PERSECUTION:

A policy or campaign to exterminate, drive away, or subjugate a people because of their religion, race or beliefs.



Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Hebrews 13:3

About 75% of the world's population lives in areas with severe religious restrictions, many of them are Christians. Persecution occurs whenever believers are denied the protection of religious freedom, prevented from converting to Christianity because of legal or social threats, physically attacked or killed because of their faith, forced to leave their job or home because of the threat of violence, or imprisoned and interrogated, and often tortured for refusing to deny their faith.

Though we may not face persecution, we are called to be united with the part of the Body of Christ that does face persecution daily. The most important way to unite with our brothers and sisters who do face persecution is through prayer.

Worldwide there are several organizations working with persecuted believers. We mention two of them: Open Doors and VOM (Voice of the Martyrs).



OpenDoors

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

Open Doors works in the world's most oppressive countries, strengthening Christians to stand strong in the face of persecution

and equipping them to shine Christ's light in these dark places. Their World Watch List (WWL) is a ranking of 50 countries (of the 65) where persecution of Christians for religious reasons is worst. They come from all denominations in the entire country where they are persecuted for their faith, not for political, economic, social, ethnic or accidental reasons. For specific prayer requests, please visit the website: <http://www.worldwatchlist.us/>

The Voice of the Martyrs was founded in 1967 by Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, who was imprisoned for 14 years in Communist Romania for his faith in Christ. His wife, Sabina, was imprisoned for three years. In the 1960s, Richard, Sabina, and their son, Mihai, were ransomed out of Romania and came to the United States. Website: <https://www.persecution.com/>



Muslim Background Believers (MBB) often face persecution from Muslim family members, who observe a strict form of Islam.



"If God promised His servants an unbroken run of prosperity, there would be many counterfeit Christians. Don't be surprised at famine [or persecution]... it is permitted to root you deeper just as a whirlwind makes the tree grapple deeper roots into soil. F.B . Meyer, *Abraham*.

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH IN THE NEAR EAST

Because of reasons of space, we've chosen a few countries that are closest to Israel.

ISRAEL (VOM info)

Israel: Jewish 75.4%, Muslim 16.7%, Christian 2.0%

Palestinian Territories: Muslim 87.7%, Christian 1.6%

President: Shimon Peres;



Israel, the world's only Jewish-majority country, is a parliamentary democracy. More than 4,000 Arab evangelical Christians worship in Gaza and the West Bank.

Gaza Strip — This small territory has 1.5 million people; since 2007 controlled by Hamas (political movement and Islamist terrorist organization). More than 70 percent of Gaza's population lives in poverty and receives humanitarian assistance.

West Bank — Of the more than 2.5 million people, 80 percent are Palestinian Arabs, controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

More than 120,000 Christians live in Israel, including about 17,000 Messianic Jewish believers. There are an estimated 8,000 Palestinian Arab evangelical believers, with 1,400 of those in the West Bank and 300 in Gaza. Each of the three areas of Israel has a distinct persecution environment. Both Arab and Jewish believers are persecuted and harassed, sometimes violently. Muslim extremists periodically persecute Arab Christians, particularly those from



(left) Mother of our sister Ruth Khoury from Nazareth during a visit at JBC

Muslim backgrounds. Although some churches meet openly in the West Bank, the situation for Arab Christians is more oppressive in rural villages of the West Bank and in Gaza. In Israel, the ultra-orthodox Jewish group *Yad L'Achim* is dedicated to resort to violence and harassment of Messianic Jews, Christians and missionaries in recent years.



PALESTINIAN AUTHORITIES

Moderate persecution; Leader: President Mahmoud Abbas; Government: Interim administration; Main Religion: Islam; Source of persecution: Islamic extremism



Anti-Christian violence has increased, mostly caused by Islamic extremists, although Muslim-background believers face pressure from family, too. The authorities fail to uphold the rights of individual Christians, causing some to flee to safer areas. In Gaza, Christians are enticed into becoming Muslims, especially during Ramadan, with the offers of jobs, houses, wives and diplomas. Sometimes the approach is violent, as with repeated attacks on a Greek Orthodox monastery in Bethany.

EGYPT

Leader: Interim President Adly Mahmud Mansour
Government: Republic; Main Religion: Islam
Population: 86.8 million (10 million Christians)
Source of persecution: Islamic extremism



Egypt's indigenous Coptic community and those who come to faith from a Muslim background are under extreme pressure. Muslims who convert to Christianity have long faced persecution from family members, who punish them for abandoning the Islamic faith. The Muslim Brotherhood continues to burn and damage churches as part of sectarian violence against Coptic Christians.

"Have mercy on me, O LORD; consider my trouble which I suffer of them that hate me, you that lift me up from the gates of death."

Psalm 9:13

JORDAN

Leader: King Abdullah II

Government: Constitutional Monarchy

Main Religion: Islam

Population: 6.7 million (172,000 Christians)

Source of persecution: Islamic extremism



Influenced by the Arab Spring tension has increased between moderate and Islamist elements in Jordanian society. The Muslim Brotherhood and Salafists aim to transform Jordan into an Islamic state. Although traditional Christians still enjoy a relatively high degree of religious freedom, believers from a Muslim background are

facing more violence and greater pressure from family, government and society.

LEBANON (VOM info)

Category: Hostile Nation

Religion: Muslim 59.0%, Christian 32.0%

Ideology: Islam

Head of State: President Michel Sulayman



War, instability and the growing influence of militant Islam has ripped the previously Christian nation apart. While it remains the only Arab state that is not officially Muslim, Hezbollah, the Shiite Muslim militia, controls much of southern Lebanon. With a population including Muslims, Christians and Druze, Lebanon is very sensitive to its religious balance and has been a haven for the region's religious minorities for centuries. The three largest religious groups are Shiite Muslim, Sunni Muslim and Maronite Catholic.

New converts often must hide from their families, and Christians are occasionally intimidated and persecuted by Islamic fundamentalists. Evangelical Christians have also reported being harassed by traditional Christian groups.

TURKEY (VOM info)

Religion: Muslim 96.6%, Christian 0.2%

Ideology: Islam

Head of State: President Abdullah Gul



The country has been officially secular since 1924, but 97% of the population is Muslim. Despite a constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, the Turkish government denies full legal recognition to religious minorities, including Christians. Non-Muslims are denied the right to train clergy, offer religious education and own and maintain places of worship. Conversion is not illegal, but converts have been charged with “insulting

Turkishness.” Christians frequently experience discrimination, slander, personal and church attacks. The Turkish media sometimes portray Christians as foreign intelligence agents intent on undermining the Turkish state.

SYRIA

Leader: President Bashar al-Assad

Government: Republic

Main Religion: Islam

Population: 21.8 million (1.3 million Christians)

Source of persecution: Islamic extremism



Due to the civil conflict there is an escalation of severe, targeted violence against Christians. Syrian opposition increasingly ‘Islamizes, thus Christians become more vulnerable. Many have been abducted, physically harmed or killed and churches are damaged or destroyed. Even though there is unrest throughout Syria, Christians in particular are being persecuted because their faith is in direct opposition to the cause of Muslim extremists.

IRAQ

Leader: Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki
Government: Parliamentary democracy
Main Religion: Islam
Population: 35.9 million (330,000 Christians)
Source of persecution: Islamic extremism



الله أكبر



Increasing attacks and threats against Christians due to a rise in Islamist terrorist groups, influenced by the conflict in Syria. Wanting to empty the country of Christians, this situation is aggravated by the government's total authority. Regularly Christians are killed, kidnapped or abused. Even in the relatively unrestricted, semi-autonomous Kurdish region, the security situation for Christians is deteriorating.

IRAN

Leader: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
Government: Islamic Republic
Main Religion: Islam
Population: 77.2 million (450,000 Christians)
Source of persecution: Islamic extremism



The regime monitors church services, arrests converts, bans Farsi language services and has closed some churches. Attacks against Christian communities have increased, and house churches are forbidden. The harsh treatment has only served to make the church grow.

**"So many Christians sealed their witness to Christ with their blood that *martures* (witness) came to mean "martyrs." Their blood, as the second-century theologian Tertullian stated, became the seed of the church. Many were drawn to faith in Christ by observing how calmly and joyously Christians met their deaths."
John MacArthur**

General Background Information about the Druze



Worldwide there are about one million Druze who mainly live in Syria and Lebanon with 104,000 in Israel. The (secret) Druze religion is a blend of Islam, Greek philosophy, Judaism and Hindu influences. The community is closed to outsiders as they believe that everyone is the reincarnation of someone who lived before. Druze reli-

gious books are only accessible to the initiates, the *uqqal* ('knowers'). The *juhal* ('ignorant') accept the faith by tradition handed down from generation to generation. There are no rituals or fixed daily liturgy, no defined holy days or obligation for pilgrimage. Druze are expected to: speak the truth, support their brethren, purify themselves from heresy, accept the unity of God, and submit to the will of God.

Men cover their shaved head by a white turban or crocheted cap, and have a mustache while the women wear a white head scarf (*naqab*). Druze are forbidden to eat pork, smoke or drink alcohol. They gather at specific dates at a tomb of a prophet (e.g. Nebi Shu'eib = Jethro or Al-Khadr = Elijah) to discuss community affairs.

Even though their language and culture are Arabic, Druze refrained from taking part in the Arab-Jewish conflict during the British Mandate and instead actively participated on Israel's side during the 1948 War of Independence. Now an officially recognized separate religious entity in Israel, they serve in the IDF and in the Israeli parliament.

In Israel, Druze villages can be found mainly in the Galilee, on Mount Carmel and on the Golan Heights. Some are exclusively populated by Druze, like Daliyat el-Carmel with 13,000 residents, Beit Jan (Mt. Meron), Ein el-Asad, Kisral and Yirka. Isfiya is 70% Druze and the rest Arab Christians and Mus-



lims. Shfar'am also has a mixed community. On the Golan, Majdal Shams is considered to be the center of the Druze community. Most of the Druze inhabitants of Mas'ada and Buk'ata earn their livelihood from growing apples and grapes.

Overlooking Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee) is Maghar, believed to be the ancient city of Ma'ariya, where a priestly family lived in Talmudic times when many olive trees surrounded the village. They still thrive there today. Of the 17,000 people living in Maghar, 60% are Druze, 20% Muslim and 20% Christian. (Excerpt from an article written by Dr. Naim Aridi from Maghar.)

DRUZE BELIEVERS IN ISRAEL – by Brother Issam

In a short period of time during the year 2004, in the village of Maghar several Druze families (men, women and children) came to faith in Christ and were baptized. (Druze believe in Jesus as their Messiah, but this is known only to the initiated.) A rumor that Christian boys had posted pictures of naked Druze girls on the internet resulted in fights and hostility between the two communities. So when it became known that some Druze had become Christians, this was perceived as passing over to the camp of their enemy. A heavy time of persecution followed.

Druze believers living in other villages in Israel were not accepted among their families, but were not persecuted as those living in Maghar.

[n.b. Brother Issam himself is a Druze who came to faith in Christ many years ago.]



"One man with God is a majority." Brother Andrew

"Religious persecution may shield itself under the guise of a mistaken and over-zealous piety." Edmund Burke

"Against the persecution of a tyrant the godly have no remedy but prayer." John Calvin

Excerpt interview with Jeff King, September 2013, *Decision magazine*

"Apart from North Korea the persecution from the old communist world is decreasing. On the other hand we see a rise in persecution in the Muslim world because radical Islam is growing everywhere. The hot areas are Egypt, Pakistan and Nigeria.

One thing that marks the persecuted brothers and sisters is their joy. It's the mark of the Holy Spirit. Unity is one of the byproducts of persecution. In Egypt, there was always a strong division between the orthodox – the Coptic – and the evangelicals. But in these last years as they've suffered so tremendously, they say, "We've all been thrown into prison together, all of us." There is no fear left in those that are persecuted. The world has lost its grip on them. Here in the West, we're too in love with this world. We live in a moral cesspool and need to hate it rather than embrace it. We make do with just a little bit of God. We love position, standing, wealth and material things. The effect of persecution is it cuts all those bonds. You're left without a position, you've become a loser, an outcast, your wealth is usually destroyed and your children can be taken from you. You either fold or walk away from Christianity or you fold on the world and go all-in with Christ. God has an upside-down economy. He is interested in the size of your heart for Him, not your bank account. Once we give up on the world and have Christ as our true treasure, then the Holy Spirit can do an amazing work with us. Then we're crucified with Christ and we can truly live for Him."

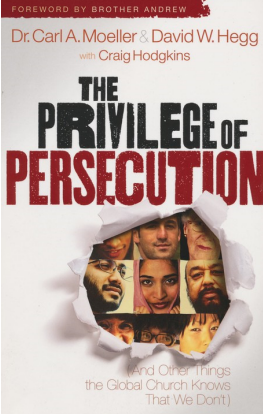
Father sat down on the edge of the narrow bed. "Corrie," he began gently, "when you and I go to Amsterdam-when do I give you your ticket?"

"Why, just before we get on the train," I said.

"Exactly. And our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. Don't run out ahead of Him, Corrie. When the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need-just in time."

Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*

BOOK REVIEW



The Privilege of Persecution: And Other Things the Global Church Knows that we don't By Carl Moeller, David Hegg and Craig Hodgkins. Moody Publishers 2011, Paperback, 176 pages; Also available as an eBook at Christianbook.com

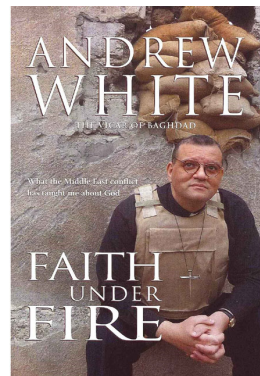
Through a combination of inspiring real-life stories, firsthand experiences, and exposition of key Scripture passages, Dr. Carl Moeller and Pastor David Hegg examine the "normal Christian life" of Christ-followers currently suffering persecution around the world. The authors explore the areas of community, leadership, worship, prayer, and generosity, among others, revealing specific attitudes and actions of the suffering church that can renew the spiritual lives of Christians in the West. Each chapter ends with challenging questions and suggestions for personal and corporate application.

FAITH UNDER FIRE by Andrew White

Paperback, 192 pages. Includes 8 pages of color photos Also available as eBook at Christianbook.com As the minister of St George's Anglican Church, Baghdad, Andrew White, shadowed by bodyguards, builds and encourages and loves and consoles his beleaguered congregation. In this candid book he squarely answers the questions that his circumstances force into the open. What does his family think each time he returns to Iraq, which may be saying goodbye to his family for the last time? How does he remain cheerful

despite his physical weakness and the progression of his MS? Can he see the hand of God in the pain, the sorrow and the persecution?

The Reverend Canon Andrew White HonPhD (born 1964) is vicar of St George's Church, Baghdad, the only Anglican church in Iraq. He has thus been dubbed the "Vicar of Baghdad". Despite his worsening multiple sclerosis, he continues to serve the believers in Iraq.



DVD REVIEW



Stories of the Persecuted Church DVD ~ *A collection of 6 DVD's detailing stories of persecution* ~ available at Christiancinema.com

Agent Abbey

Abbey, a typical American teenager travels to China for the first time with her dad, a photojournalist. She gets caught up in a plot involving a Christian friend, a secret agent, "illegal" Bibles, and the police! Filmed on location in China and Taiwan.

Bamboo in Winter

This film shows the persecution of Christians in China and the cost of following Christ through the eyes of a young Chinese girl.

Behind The Sun

Samir Majan becomes a Christian when he attends college in America, then returns to his Muslim family. Based on real-life situations.

Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace

Bonhoeffer, a German clergyman, actively opposed Hitler and the Nazis. This movie sheds light on the German resistance and that of the clergy.

China Cry

The true story of Sung Neng Yee, (Nora "Lamb"), who escaped from Communist China to Hong Kong to the USA.

Stephen's Test of Faith

Twelve-year-old Stephen travels through history in a dream. He meets Jesus, Stephen the martyr, families about to enter the Roman coliseum, William Tyndale, Christian children in today's Middle East, and others who dare to share their faith. This DVD, suitable to all ages, is a powerful tool for Sunday schools as well.

NEWS FROM OUR JBC FAMILY ABROAD

Ruth Campbell

"What a FEAST for the soul to read the entire JBC Newsletter! Thank you all so much for the news and encouraging articles. How I miss you all, the services, the fellowship, the love, the friendship and sheer variety of all the ministries, not least at Christmas for the Bethlehem outreach. May our Lord continue to bless you all richly in this new year.... I have finally settled into my Oxford flat which needed much maintenance, found a local church which is very supportive of Israel and joined a Prayer for Israel group which meets weekly.... I am trusting the Lord to take me back to the Land in autumn but just await details of how to return. Lots of love and blessings to everyone at JBC!" Ruth Campbell. Email: dolphinsquareruth@yahoo.co.uk



Sandy Wingate

"Shalom Y'all! I can't believe that I have been here nine months already. I am still living with my sister and her husband, but ask the Lord to provide a small apartment that I can afford so I can soon have a place of my own. My part-time online work with Educational Testing service is going pretty well. I can work from my home but appreciate your praying for more hours per week. I volunteer with the Baptist International Language School and have the privilege to give a Bible lessons during the Chapel time. On Sunday mornings I

teach a women's Bible class at west Mobile Baptist Church. During the Annual International Festival last November I volunteered at the Israel Booth



where I met the Israeli representative of the Jewish Agency. They invited me to the Chanukah dinner at the Reform synagogue, which led to an invitation to sing in their congregation's small choir. So on Friday evenings I'm now singing regularly at the Reform synagogue! May the Lord make His presence in your lives more real than ever in 2014! Love and shalom from Mobile."

Sandy Wingate. Email: sandywingate@mail2go.net

Some of you may know **Tom and Sarah Meyer**, who used to come to JBC while they were in Israel. On December 30th 2013 their second child was born: Scarlett Faith Meyer. Tom wrote, "We want to thank you for praying with us through this special pregnancy and delivery. Sarah and Scarlett are both healthy. We are praising the Lord Jesus Christ for the expertise of the doctors and nurses." Email: tommeyer2001@yahoo.com



LOCAL JBC family news



Mazal tov to Rev. David and Hyejung with the birth of their son DOHA, who was born in December 2013.



If you would like to announce a birth, wedding, birthday or other special occasion, please pass the info to the JBC Editorial Staff.

CALENDAR MARCH & APRIL 2014

MARCH

13: *Ta'anit* Esther (fast)

16 & 17: Purim

APRIL

14: *Leil Seder* – (Seder evening)

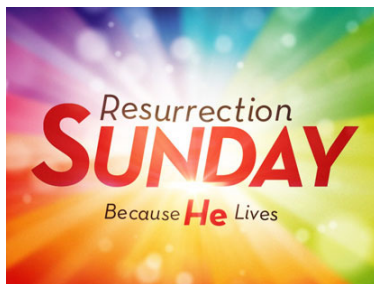
15: 1st day of *Pesach* (like a Shabbat)

18: Good Friday

20: Resurrection Sunday

21: Last day of *Pesach* (like a Shabbat)

28: *Yom haShoah* (Holocaust Remembrance Day)



PURIM KATAN (Little Purim)

Based on the solar/lunar year, the ordinary Jewish year has 353 – 355 days. Because Jewish holidays are always celebrated on the same calendar day, this would mean that in certain years, Passover would be celebrated in summer, autumn or winter, instead of spring. To balance out the drift, an extra month was added every three years - Adar I; the regular month was called Adar II. The “pregnant”, or leap year has 383 – 385 days.



Purim is celebrated on the 14th of Adar. 2014 is a leap year, and on February 13th, (14 Adar I) some communities celebrate a “Purim Katan” – a small Purim, in addition to the real Purim, celebrated on 14 Adar II ((March 16 & 17, 2014). Many Diaspora communities faced events similar to those in the times of Queen Esther. Those times in which they

were miraculously saved from decrees and pogroms, were written on a scroll (Megillah) and read each year during Purim Katan.

In 1615 a local baker in Frankfurt, Germany, pronounced himself a 'new Haman' and organized an attack against the Jews. They fought back but eventually were driven out and forced to leave their possessions behind. When the German ruler realized that an injustice had been done he asked the Jews to return. The wicked baker was killed and his house destroyed. A plaque on the site told of what he had done and how he was punished. Each year on the anniversary of their return, Frankfurt's Jews celebrated a 'special Purim' and read a *Megillah* (scroll) telling the story.

Purim (read the book of Esther) is the celebration of the deliverance of the Jews from an enemy bent on their destruction. Purim (from *Pur* – lot) refers to Haman's use of lots to choose the date for his intended destruction of the Jews – Adar 13. Celebrations of the Jews' survival were celebrated on Adar 14 and because the city of Shushan was a walled city, also the next day (Adar 15) celebrations continued. Since that time 'Shushan' Purim was celebrated in cities that were walled in the time of Joshua. (This explains why Tel Aviv celebrates Purim on March 16, and Jerusalem on March 17.)

The name of God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, but His finger certainly is. His providence quietly but sovereignly is at work in the lives of men and women. The Esther *Megillah* is the only book in the Bible in which illustrations are permitted because the name of God is not mentioned in it.

Purim memories from Haya benHayim

"I always like Purim – to make merry and dress up in costumes and have fun. Because it was victory over the enemies of the Jews. Always in the end the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob gives us the winning side. Somehow I often get the first prize for my original costume at parties. Tel Aviv has a big party every year, very colorful with floats, dancing, singing, tricks, etc. In Jerusalem we celebrate a day later – real special. Also much gaiety. After all, it is the City of God!"



The JANUARY and FEBRUARY that was...



SOOOOOOO many birthdays in January! Billie baked a lot of her famous cakes!



Aunev also had his birthday



Saying
good-bye to
Bob and
Suzanne—
with cake
AND ice
cream!





45 Students of the Moody Bible College and Dr. Winfred Neely visited JBC on February 9.



← These wonderful ladies helped serving the Fellowship diner



↓ Helen celebrated her 75th birthday in February





Dr. Robert White spoke at JBC on February 23. With him were **Bill Haire** and **Jon Duncan**, who hope to bring a large men's choir from Georgia, USA in 2015. We'll keep you posted!

Update from Charlie and Teena

They went to Russia for two weeks with the Gideons, a most challenged mission trip with soldiers, police, securities and checkpoints everywhere. God was at work: the Gospel was preached, Bibles handed out, lives touched. They blessed pastors and churches, encouraged, and motivated them as they continue the work by evangelizing and distributing Bibles in Russia.



"Thank you for your prayers, encouragement and support. May the Lord bless you and keep you!" Charlie and Teena

A communist beat a Christian and said, "I am almighty, as you suppose your God can be. I can kill you." The Christian replied, "The power is all on my side. I can love you while you torture me to death." Richard Wurmbrand.

"The first step on the way to victory is to recognize the enemy." Corrie ten Boom

"A religion that is small enough for our understanding would not be big enough for our needs." Corrie ten Boom

Established in 1925, the **Baptist House in Jerusalem** is one of Jerusalem's oldest Protestant institutions. Jerusalem Baptist Church (JBC) is a member of the Baptist Convention of Israel and is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States. We operate under the *amuta* of the Baptist Convention of Israel.

Over the years, faithful congregants have joyfully served in many positions throughout Israel and partnered with many denominations and organizations to serve the Savior here. Each Sunday, the worship service is filled with people from many nations, and visitors from around the globe. You may be surprised to find someone from your hometown worshipping with us when you visit!

The purpose of JBC is to serve the interest of Jesus Christ in this city until He returns.

Sunday morning Prayer Meeting at 9.30 A.M.

Sunday Worship at 10:45 A.M.

Adult Sunday School at 9:30 A.M.

Children's Sunday School ages K-6. Older children are invited to attend the main service.

Communion: every first Sunday of the month.

Wednesday Prayer Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Friday Ladies' Bible Study at 9.30 a.m.

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